

Current Play
Structure Location

Proposed Play
Structure Location

Jenkins Elementary School



if proposed playground site is clear of all utilities" - Bob Cillon

Jenkins Playground Structure Relocation Safety Concerns

The current playground structure raises a multitude of safety concerns for members of the Jenkins and Scituate communities:

Blind Spots

Recess staff cannot see the blacktop and field areas when watching the playground, as sufficient playground supervision often requires turning ones back to the blacktop / field and/or being too far to see other recess areas. This is concerning should an emergency arise and requires additional staff during recess times.

Icy Buildup

The current structure is in the shade of the school building. As a result, when it rains or snows during the winter, this area remains treacherous longer than the rest of the play spaces.

Public Safety

A major concern for neighbors of the Jenkins community is the use of the playground after hours and safety of the neighborhood. There have been reports of nefarious behavior and vandalism on the playground. The current playground is tucked away and not visible from any public vantage points, which has encouraged misdeeds. Moving the playground to a more visible area will promote public safety and dissuade people from misusing or destroying the playspace.



OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

SCITUATE POLICE DEPARTMENT

SCITUATE, MASSACHUSETTS 02066 / TELEPHONE (781) 545-1212 / FAX (781) 545-9659

To: Jenkins PTO and Playground Committee

From: Sergeant Michael Prouty

Date: January 23, 2023

Subject: Relocation of Jenkin's School Play Structure

Jenkins PTO and Playground Committee,

As the primary liaison for School Safety and Security within Scituate Public Schools, I Sergeant Michael Prouty, along with School Resource Officer Nick Sharpy support the movement of the Jenkins School play structure.

This move would place the play structure in an improved location more inside the public view. Additionally, this would set the structure in better view of our current school camera system.

The Scituate Police Department continues to do routine checks of all School building during off hours. These checks are performed on both the eve shift and overnight shift by Patrol Officers. The new proposed location, being not in the alcove will allow for better line-of-sight for officers checking the building during routine patrols.

I have spoken with Chief Mark Thompson, whom also gave his support to this move and provided no negative feedback to the proposed location change. Please feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Prouty".

Sergeant Michael Prouty

Scituate Police Department



OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF
SCITUATE FIRE DEPARTMENT

800 CHIEF JUSTICE CUSHING HIGHWAY • SCITUATE, MASSACHUSETTS 02066
TELEPHONE (781) 544-7995 / FAX (781) 545-2546

MARK A. DONOVAN

Deputy Chief of Department
Fire Prevention Officer
mdonovan@scituatema.gov

January 24, 2023

To Whom it May Concern:

The Fire Department was contacted by the Jenkins School PTO for feedback on the current playground at Jenkins Elementary School for comments on the proposed relocated playground layout.

Today I toured the existing playground with Principal Mary Oldach, who shared her concerns with me. The proposed locations and plans of the new playground were also viewed.

Emergency vehicle access to both the current and proposed site is difficult due to grade changes on the southeast side of the building. The new site will be closer to the front of the building making Fire Department accesses easier compared to the current location. The proposed rubber surfacing will be a significant safety improvement over the varied levels of woodchips currently used.

Considering the relocation, safety improvements and better access for the disabled, The Fire Department supports the replacement of the current Jenkins School Playground which is over 20 years old.

Please feel free to contact myself or Chief Murphy with any further concerns.

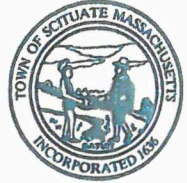
Sincerely,

Mark A. Donovan,
Deputy Fire Chief

Town of Scituate

OFFICE OF BUILDING COMMISSIONER
ZONING ENFORCEMENT OFFICER

600 Chief Justice Cushing Hwy.
Scituate, Massachusetts 02066
(781) 545-8716



MEMORANDUM

Date: January 24, 2023

Subject: Jenkins Elementary School Playground – Proposed Relocation and Redesign

Addressed to: Jenkins School PTO
Jenkins Elementary School
54 Vinal Avenue
Scituate, MA 02066

To Concerned Parties;

I have been requested to provide an opinion as to the present status and condition of the Jenkins Elementary School playground. Without close examination and evaluation, this opinion is necessarily general in nature and subject to future confirmation and correction. However, I believe my familiarity with this situation, based on past experience at the site, is sufficient to provide some degree of value. I have also visited the site today to refresh my recollections.

There are three main categories to be considered when contemplating a redesign and relocation of the present playground.

First – location. As explained to me by JoAnn Wislocki on a phone call earlier today, the present location has several drawbacks. It is close to classroom windows, leading to noise and visual distractions for students in these classrooms. It is distant from other play areas often used concurrently, so that separate supervision becomes necessary, entailing the use of additional staff. It is shaded much of the time, particularly in winter, so ice and snow are more likely to accumulate and to persist.

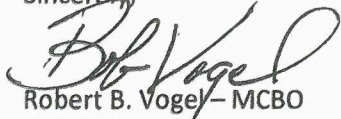
Second – the play structures. Particularly when considering barrier free access (which, to comply with State and Federal regulations, must be universal), there is specific, compliant design for each structure. It is likely that most of the present structures in use at Jenkins meet these standards - a closer review would be necessary to determine this – but new and improved structures and equipment are constantly being developed. Accurate determination of physical condition of the structures would again require a closer examination, but it appears from a quick lookover that some show deterioration due to age and hard use and are candidates for replacement.

Third – the play surface. Playground surfacing material is as critical an element as the play structures themselves in providing barrier-free access. The Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) approves only limited types of surfacing: poured-in-place rubber or rubber-polymer matting (this is what was used for the Wampatuck playground); prefabricated sheet and tile material of similar composition

and shredded/chunked rubber "mulch". It is interesting to note that treated bark mulch, the present surface at Jenkins, while sometimes meeting Federal ADA standards, is not approved by the MAAB.

I hope the above brief commentary serves your purposes and look forward to assisting you in any way I can as this project moves forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Vogel", written over the printed name.

Robert B. Vogel - MCBO
Building Commissioner
Zoning Enforcement Officer



Town of Scituate

**600 Chief Justice Cushing Highway
Scituate, MA 02066
Telephone (781) 545-8732
Fax (781) 545-8704**

Department of Public Works

**Kevin F. Cafferty
Director**

January 26, 2023

Jenkins Elementary School
54 Vinal Ave
Scituate, MA 02066

Dear Jenkins' PTO,

The Department of Public Works supports the PTO's efforts in removing and building a new playground as the equipment is outdated.

Thank you.
Sincerely,

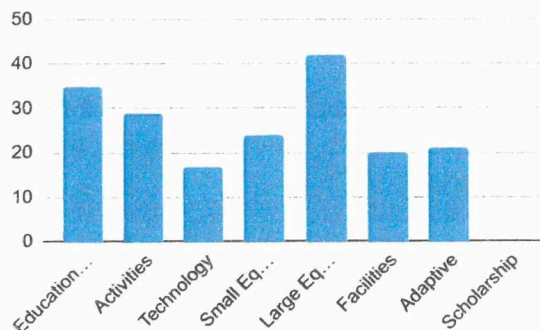
Kevin Cafferty
Department of Public Works, Director

Jenkins Community (Parents and Staff)

As the PTO embarked upon the 2022-2023 school year, two different forms/questionnaires were distributed to the Jenkins community in order to best determine our allocation of time and resources for the coming year. A Google Form was sent via email and social media to families and Jenkins staff received a rating form at their Welcome Back Breakfast. A variation of the question "What do you see as the most important fundraising goals for the PTO this year" was asked. For the parents, a new playground ranked in the top 3, while teachers (those with the most experience with the playground) rated it their number one priority. Over 40% of participants in both surveys expressed that raising funds to improve the playground was a top priority.

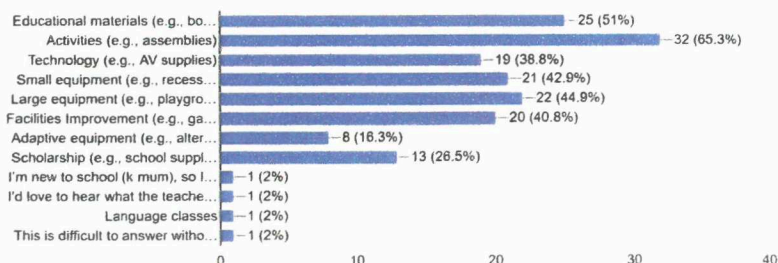
Specific concerns with the playground include:

- Location (safety)
 - Blind spots (need additional staff for blacktop and field)
 - Freezes and does not thaw due to lack of sun
- Location (logistics)
 - Wind tunnel / cold
 - LOUD and visual distraction (many classrooms abutt and have to deal with distraction)
- Limited accessibility for children with mobility issues
- Woodchips
 - Difficult to traverse
 - Irritating to feet / constantly in shoes / messy
- Structure
 - Generally outdated / Concerned for safety ("lawsuit waiting to happen")
 - Structural elements are too small to challenge the upper grades, but too difficult for K-1.



What do you see as the most important fundraising goals for the PTO this year (check all that apply)?

49 responses



Jenkins Elementary School

54 Vinal Avenue
Scituate, Massachusetts 02066
(781) 545-4910



January 23, 2023

Jenkins PTO & Playground Committee:

Over the past few years there have been numerous injuries related to the Jenkins School Playground structure. Some examples include the following:

- Fractured arm from a fall from the monkey bars
- Fractured finger from swing chain that broke
- Multiple wrist sprains from fall from the monkey bars
- Concussion from falling from the swings
- Frequent bumped heads from hitting the structure
- Multiple skinned knees from the structure's surface
- Splinters from the wood chips that are at the structure
- Multiple injuries from the large rocks that are on the structure's site

Keeping in mind that injuries and recess go hand in hand, I believe that our structure is adding to the number of recess injuries that I see in the health office. Replacing the antiquated structure would help minimize the risk of these recess injuries.

Sincerely,

Mary Ryan Conway BSN RN
Jenkins School Nurse

Jenkins Community (Students)

Jenkins Third Graders have written persuasive essays in favor of a new playground. Please see the samples, attached, to let these budding scholars' words speak for themselves.

In addition, the following comments were made by other resident playground experts:

What I don't like is that the monkey bars are too high and I would like them to be lower. It's not fair that the kindergarteners and first graders who know how to use monkey bars can't use them because they're too high. What I would like to see is a climbing tower." -Grace S, 2nd Grade

"The whole thing is just terrible!" -Brynley A., 4th Grade

"The playground is too small. The 5th graders all want bigger climbing structures and a zip line where their feet don't drag on the ground. Even the tunnels are too small to get through." -Holland W, 5th Grade

"I would like a twisty tunnel slide, twisty climbing ladder, and a zip line where my feet don't touch the ground. It would be awesome if we had those things you can bong against that they have at North Scituate playground and it makes a pretty sound." -Olin A, 2nd Grade

"We want a spiderweb, a bigger bridge, and bigger slides because the big kids all like sliding but they're too small for us" - Jack T, 3rd Grade

"My friend and I both broke our arm on the playground in the same week!" - Teagan F, 5th Grade

"I like having the monkey bars and zip line but they are just so old and rusty! And everything is just so small!" - Lucy and Livvy P, 1st Grade

"We need one of those climbing rope thingies like in North Scituate and lower monkey bars" - Graham S, Kindergarten

"When I go under the structure, I always hit my head. Also- it would be cool if there were a few cabins where kids could hang out when it's cold and stuff" - Rose W, 3rd Grade

"The slides are too small and I can barely go down them! I don't normally play on it, so I don't know what to change about it. I'm the tallest kid in school! I'd like a zip line that is higher off the ground. Keep the swings. Climbing structure, fun slides,, a spinning device, an area to play tag, and good hiding spots!" - Alex P, 5th Grade

November 30, 2022

Dear ScituateCommunity Preservation Commission Members,

I think we should make our playground MORE FUN, SAFER, and ACCESSIBLE.

Our playground is small. We need to make it bigger so more people can go on the structure at the same time. We should add a spiderweb and a seesaw to make it more fun for kids of all ages. We should also add ramps so people with wheelchairs can get onto the structure.

To make the playground safer we should take out the wood chip because if you build the ramps, how are the people in wheelchairs going to get on the playground? We should make the floor out of rubber so kids with wheelchairs can go on the playground. Also, my friend sprained his wrist from falling on the wood chips. We also need to make the zipline better and higher and put a block or a step under it so short kids like me can go on.

We need to make a smaller playground for the kindergartens to play on too. Our school does not have the money to build all this stuff so I'm asking you to send us the money we need. Please!

From,

Brian

December 1, 2022

Dear Scituate Community Preservation Commission Members,

I am W[REDACTED], a third-grade student from Jenkins Elementary School. I am writing to ask you to consider supporting the building of a new playground playscape at our school. Our play structure is old and rusty. It is not safe and we need a better area to play and to strengthen our bodies and brains.

Many kids have been hurt on our playground. We found out that 16 out of 19 kids in our class got hurt at least one time on the playground. One kid in my class fractured his wrist on the playground. It is also many years old. There are holes in the ground where the wood chips have washed away, so there should be a new rubber ground covering put in to keep kids from being seriously hurt when they slip or fall. Rubber is not as slippery and it can be waterproof and fireproof. Kids have been throwing wood chips at other kids so it would be good to get rid of the wood chips.

The play structure needs to be more accessible for other kids. We need to add ramps near the steps so all kids can use the slides. Also the zip line could have a seat instead of a hand bar. The rubber surface would make it easier for wheelchairs to move around quickly. The other problem is we need a play structure for the younger kids at school. The monkey bars are now too high, but if we just lower them then the older kids would bump their heads. That's why two structures would be better.

There are also lots of cool climbing structures that would be better for kids. A spiderweb and an underground tunnel would be awesome, but there are also some easy fixes too. Our soccer field does not have any lines on the soccer field and this makes kids argue about the score.

These changes would make the play structure and playground safer, accessible, and more fun for everyone! Thank you for taking your time to read this letter.

From,
W[REDACTED]

December 1, 2022

Dear Scituate Community Preservation Commission Members,

I think we should update the Jenkins School playground because it is not safe or accessible to all students. It also needs more fun, challenging equipment so students have a great recess.

First of all, we found out that 13 out of the 19 kids in our class have been sent to the nurse while playing on the playground. Nine of these people have been to the nurse at least two times. In my opinion, the playground we have now is better for kindergarten and 1 grade students. The bars are too low for older students. When we try to use the zipline our feet touch the ground! The slides are too small so not all students use them properly. If we had 2 different playgrounds this would not happen..

For the older playground I have some ideas. We could add a spider web, a rope swing, and a rock wall. For the younger kids the playground we have now could be updated just a little. For safety, we should GET RID OF THE WOOD CHIPS. The wood chips can hurt you by being thrown at you, getting one in your eye, or falling on them. For accessibility instead of stairs we should add ramps. This will help people in wheelchairs use the equipment.

Thank you for reading my request. I hope you will help us.

From,

L [REDACTED]

Jenkins Community (Neighbors)

Safety

A major concern for neighbors of the Jenkins community is the use of the playground after hours and safety of the neighborhood. There have been reports of nefarious behavior and vandalism on the playground. The current playground is tucked away and not visible from any public vantage points, which has encouraged misdeeds. Moving the playground to a more visible area will promote public safety and dissuade people from misusing or destroying the playspace.

Proximity

The Jenkins Elementary School playground is the only playground within the Jenkins district. While other school communities may be within walking distance to The Purple Dinosaur or North Scituate playgrounds, the next closest playground for many Jenkins community members is Gaffield Park in Norwell.

Town-wide use

The proposed playground is for children aged 5-12 who will use the playground during their school days, 180 days a year for 2-4 hours a day. The playground is also frequented outside of school hours by community members. It is a social gathering spot for after-school hangouts, playdates, and siblings of children who walk to/from school. On the weekends and during the summer, children from all over Scituate use the playground in formal and informal capacities. Programs such as (but not limited to) the YMCA aftercare, Scituate Rec Department, and Best Buddies Program all are located at Jenkins (or Jenkins-adjacent) facilities and use of the playground is anticipated and encouraged. Put simply, while this will technically be the "Jenkins Elementary School Playground," it will service the entire Scituate community.

Abutters

Please see attached notice for abutters. This letter was hand-delivered to neighbors by Bethanny Kenneway, a neighbor and member of the Jenkins School Council. Feedback received was incredibly positive. The neighbors were excited for the opportunity to improve the play area for the students at Jenkins, as well as promote overall public safety.



January 22, 2023

Dear Neighbor of Jenkins Elementary School,

We are writing to make you aware that the Jenkins PTO is currently applying for a Community Preservation Committee Grant to move and upgrade the Elementary School playground.

The current playground was constructed with the school in 2001, making it over twenty years old and problematic for a multitude of reasons including the location. Our proposed plan includes relocating the playground area to the corner of the blacktop where the swings currently are. Being direct abutters, we would like to hear your thoughts about how this change may impact you and your families and ways we can address any concerns.

The reasons for making this change include; moving the structure away from classrooms to reduce noise and distractions, allow thawing of ice on the playground in winter, allow better line of sight for teachers to monitor the field and playground during recess, and improve visibility of the playground from public ways to reduce unwanted activities after hours and on weekends.

We also wanted to inform you that all three vendors we have contacted quoted three weeks of construction. This will most likely occur during school hours (~7am-3pm). We understand that this may generate some additional noise and traffic during that time period, and do not take lightly the disruption this may cause.

If you have any concerns or suggestions for lessening the disturbance to you and your family, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Jenkins PTO at: JenkinsPTO@gmail.com.

With sincerest thanks,

JoAnn Wislocki and Shannon Buchanan,
Jenkins PTO Co-Chairs

Jenkins Playground Rebuild Accessibility Considerations

While all playgrounds must meet ADA compliance, it is the PTO's goal to create a playspace that is not just compliant for our community members with different needs, but also enjoyable. As such, the plan includes an ADA-complaint rubber surface, transfer-able structures, a state-of-the-art wheelchair swing, and other elements that will appeal to all children, including those with various physical, sensory, and motoric challenges.

Members of the Playground Committee have been invited to the February 8, 2023 to discuss design requests, accessibility elements, and receive feedback with the Scituate Commission on Disabilities. We look forward to collaborating with them as we strive to best serve the needs of all members of the Scituate and Jenkins communities.

Jenkins Playground Wishlist

Structural Elements

Jenkins Elementary School playground is currently a post-and-deck-style playground. This style of playground has been available to the children of Scituate at North Scituate (pirate ship structure), the Purple Dinosaur (climbing structure), and Gaffield Park in Norwell. Going forward, it is the hopes of the PTO to offer the children of Scituate a novel play experience. The Jenkins PTO has requested that all quotes include obstacle-course style / deckless elements. Per the Little Tykes catalog, the elements requested "combine physical challenges with imaginative play, helping kids ages 5-12 develop their strength, coordination, and flexibility through friendly competition." This open-ended and creative structural design will offer novel, dynamic, and universally-appealing play opportunities for Scituate's youth.

Poured in Place Rubber Surfacing

Per Bob Vogel, wood chips (the current structure) are *not* approved by the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB). Additionally, per Nurse Conroy, there are frequent splinters from the woodchips. Finally, in order to keep the playground surface compliant with 12 inches of woodchips (the amount required to soften falls from playground structure's height), it costs the town \$3,898 in materials and labor, annually, versus the one-time cost of poured in place.

Security Fence

A security fence separating the playground from the wooded hill adjacent to many of our neighbors would be appreciated for the following reasons:

- Prevention of lost playground equipment and trash (e.g., balls, beer cans)
- Noise reduction
- Prevention of overgrowth

Signage

We would like to request room in the budget for two signs:

- One to be developed in conjunction with School Council, Scituate Police, and abutters to dissuade improper after-hours use of the playground (e.g., hours of operation, rules, notice of camera features)
- One plaque (likely on a bench or other feature), commemorating playground efforts and the partnership with the CPC, such as:

This playground was funded by
Scituate's Community Preservation Committee
in generous partnership with the PTO

2024

